

FRIENDS AND COUSINS



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FRIENDS AND COUSINS



TOM BECOMES AN OUTLAW

FRIENDS AND COUSINS

BY
ABBIE FARWELL BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY
ETHEL C. BROWN



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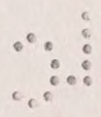
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FRIENDS AND COUSINS

CHAPTER I

THE WIGWAM

WHEN, after a long winter in the city, Kenneth and Rose came back to the Island which was their summer home, they were eager to see all their favorite places.

On the very first morning they both wanted to visit the bathing beach and the Indian forest, the chasm and the pirate cave. They wanted to know what new wonders had sprouted in the garden of live flowers, and how much their little oak tree had grown. They wanted to see if there were any deer tracks down by the spring, and if there was still a wasp's nest in a certain spot under the stone wall. Besides, there was the beech tree, where Rose had her summer-house; and the theatre among the rocks, where they used to speak pieces; and

the post office in the hollow pine, — and a hundred other places which they loved. It was very hard to choose. But finally they decided that most they wanted to see the wigwam in the forest.

They had discovered the wigwam in the forest by accident one day last summer, and they had seen it only that once; for the very next day they went back to the city. What a pity they had not found it sooner! Kenneth and Rose could hardly wait for summer to come so that they could visit it again; it was such a lovely place in which to play Indian hunter.

This first morning was not a very good one for a walk in the woods. It was gray and misty, threatening rain before night. But the children were not going to postpone their plans on that account. Kenneth put on his Indian suit, and took his bow and arrows. Rose wore her moccasins and wampum belt. Kenneth was sure that he remembered the way to the wigwam, although it was a long distance and he had gone but once.

The forest came close to the back door of Sweetbrier Cottage, and the children entered it by the same path up which the little Prouts came every day to bring the milk. Presently they came to another path, which branched to the right. This one was very narrow and indistinct, difficult to follow even in bright sunlight, but Kenneth remembered it well.

Soon they were in the midst of the dim, gray-green forest. The trees were so thick that there was little sunshine here, even on a pleasant day. They trotted happily along, their feet crunching the dry twigs and springing on the elastic moss. How good it seemed to feel the pine needles under foot, instead of brick sidewalks and asphalt!

The path grew fainter and fainter. It wavered and branched and strayed off in every direction, as if it were not quite sure which way to go. But Kenneth seemed to know where to turn, just as Indian hunters always do. Rose thought him wonderful. She did not remember anything at all except the

greenness of the moss and ferns and the brownness of the tree-trunks. On they went, farther and farther.

“I think we are almost there now,” said Kenneth at last. “I remember that old dead pine, don’t you, Rose?”

“No,” said Rose honestly. “I don’t remember. But I do think we must be almost there. It seems a long, long way.”

But when they came into the open space beyond the pine tree, there was no wigwam waiting them. Kenneth looked surprised.

“Well, it must be just a little farther,” he said. And they trudged on. It was growing darker and darker in the forest. A gray veil seemed to be drawing around them, hiding the way. Rose shivered.

“I wish I had worn my coat,” she said. “I think it is going to rain, Kenneth. Don’t you think we had better go home?”

“No, indeed!” cried Kenneth. “We are almost there now. Yes,—I remember that oak tree with the big rock beside it. I am *sure* we

are there now;" and he brushed eagerly through the bushes.

But when they passed the oak tree, there was no wigwam. Rose shook her curls uneasily. "I want to go home," she said. "It is n't nice in the forest when there is no sunshine. The trees are full of gray smoke. I wish we had waited for a sunny day."

"It is n't smoke, it is fog," said Kenneth. "I am sure that this *was* the place, but the wigwam is gone. Somebody must have pulled it down. Perhaps the Indians themselves came back."

Rose looked over her shoulder anxiously. "Let's go home," she said.

"Well, perhaps we had better," agreed Kenneth. He remembered that sometimes the Island fogs grew so thick that even the fishermen were afraid of losing their way.

They turned about and started towards the little thin path which they had left a few minutes earlier. But where had the path gone? They could not find it anywhere. The fog

was creeping around them so that they could see scarcely ten feet ahead. Kenneth took Rose by the hand, and together they stumbled on over the moss and dead branches. But still they found no path. Every few minutes they would stop and look about, and then, fearing that they were going wrong, would start in another direction. The fog grew thicker, and they could hardly see one another. Kenneth's cap was dewed with heavy drops, and Rose's curls looked almost as though she had been in bathing.

She squeezed Kenneth's hand tightly. "Are we lost, Kenneth?" she asked, in a brave voice.

"No, we are n't lost," he answered. "We know where we are, — right in the middle of the forest. But I can't remember the way home. Let us shout. Perhaps some one will hear us and show us the way."

They shouted as loudly as they could, — "Hello! Hello! Hello - o - o!" again and again; but nobody answered. There was not

a sound in the forest; only cold, damp, gray fog came sifting silently everywhere.

“I wish we had n't come,” said Rose. “Shall we get home before night? I should n't like to sleep in the forest. There might be snakes.”

Suddenly they ran into something like a wooden fence. “Hurrah!” cried Kenneth. “Look, Rose, here is the wigwam now. I told you we were near it all the time.”

Kenneth was right. There they stood in the very door of the wigwam, which had been hidden by the fog.

They gave a shout of joy and went inside. Yes, there it stood, just as they had left it a year ago. There was the piny roof, the pile of brush for a sofa; the little heap of stones which had been their play stove; the cupboard made of a hollow log.

“Somebody has been in our house,” said Kenneth, like the Great Big Bear in the story. “Here are some pieces of broken crockery.”

“Somebody has been sitting on our sofa,” cried Rose, like the Middle-sized Bear, “and

she has left her shawl. See!" — she held up a plaid shawl. "It is nice and warm. I am going to put it on."

"It is an Indian blanket," said Kenneth. "And look! Somebody has been into our cupboard and has left something to eat!" he cried, like the Little Wee Bear. He held up a pail full of blueberries, big and ripe and luscious. "Rose, it must be the Indians!"

Both the children glanced at the door and shivered. Never had the Indians seemed so near. It was very creepy here alone in the forest. The fog might be hiding all sorts of dangers which they could not see.

But soon Rose took courage. "I don't believe it was Indians," she said. "Indians don't leave things all ready for lost children. It must be the fairies. I *knew* there were fairies in this forest. I have told you so, Kenneth, ever so many times. I am hungry and I am going to eat the berries. If the fairies left them it will be perfectly safe."

"Pooh!" said Kenneth, who did not be-

lieve in fairies. But he decided to help eat the berries. The two sat down on the pine-bough sofa and began to dip out handful after handful. And the luncheon tasted so good that they spoke hardly a word for five minutes. The wigwam was as quiet as before they had come.

CHAPTER II

INDIANS

SUDDENLY, outside the wigwam, a twig snapped. There was, — yes, there certainly was a rustle in the bushes. Steps were creeping towards the wigwam. It sounded like an Indian. Kenneth grabbed his bow and arrows. Rose kept very still, but her fingers trembled. They both sat staring at the door of the wigwam.

Stealthily a face came peering around the side of the door — a dark, reddish-brown face, with bright eyes. Then another face appeared; then another. It seemed as if the fog were full of eager faces and shiny, black eyes.

“It is the Indians!” said Kenneth to himself. “At last they have really come!” He lifted his bow and pointed the arrow at the face of the tallest Indian. But just as he was



KENNETH AND ROSE SEE A STRANGE FACE IN THE
WIGWAM

about to let the arrow fly, the head in the doorway moved and a voice cried,—

“Don't shoot! I am a friend.”

Kenneth's arm dropped with surprise, and as it did so a figure stole into the tent. Behind it, out of the fog, crept five other figures in Indian file, each shorter than the one before it. They were none of them big or terrible. The tallest was about Kenneth's own height, and the smallest was hardly more than a baby. Three of them were boys and three were girls, and the little ones kept behind the others as if they were afraid.

“Ho!” said Kenneth. “I thought at first you were Indians!” and he began to laugh.

The biggest boy laughed, too. “No, we are n't Indians,” he said shyly. “We are Captain Prout's children from the Cove. I am Tom and this is Mary. That one with the freckles is Susan, and the three little ones are Bill and Bob and Jane.”

“The little Prouts!” exclaimed Rose; and they all looked at one another curiously. Al-

though Kenneth and Rose had been coming to the Island for years, this was the first time that they had stood face to face with their little neighbors who brought the milk every morning. The Prout children had always been very shy. After they had stared for some time, Kenneth remembered to be polite.

“How do you do?” he said. “I am Kenneth Thornton, and this is my sister Rose.”

“Oh, we know who you are,” said Mary Prout, “and we knew you came yesterday. We heard you yell for help just now, and we guessed where we’d find you. We were right close by. We were coming back to get the berries that Sue left here,” — she stopped abruptly, seeing the empty pail which Rose was holding.

“Oh, I am so sorry!” said Rose. “We have eaten all your lovely berries; but we thought the fairies had brought them to us.” Then they all laughed and felt better acquainted. “I suppose this is your shawl, too?” asked Rose, pulling it off.

“Yes,” said Mary, “but you are very welcome to it and the berries, too. I am so glad we left them here!”

“But how did you know about our wigwam?” said Kenneth.

The little Prouts looked at one another and laughed. “Why, you see,” said Tom, “we thought it was *our* wigwam. We built it, you know” —

“*You* built it!” interrupted Kenneth and Rose together.

“We thought it was the Indians,” explained Kenneth.

“What clever children you are!” said Rose admiringly.

The little Prouts looked pleased and proud. The three smallest ones stole out from behind Tom and Mary and Sue, and stood in a half circle around Kenneth and Rose.

“Then we had no right to come here at all,” said Kenneth, much mortified. “We were very rude to walk into your house and eat up your berries and wear your shawl. But we did not

know. Come, Rose;" and he started for the door.

"Oh, *please* don't go!" begged Tom and Mary together. And Susan and Bill and Bob and Jane said, "*Please* don't go!"

"Won't you stay and play Indian hunter, the way you did that day last year?" said Tom eagerly.

"Why, how did you know about that?" asked Kenneth, in surprise. "You were not here."

"Yes, we were," nodded Mary. "We were right over there behind the big rock. We watched you all the time."

"Why did n't you come and play with us?" said Rose. "It would have been so much nicer with eight of us, instead of two."

The faces of the little Prouts lighted up joyously. "Oh, would you play with us?" said Tommy.

"We did n't dare, then," said Mary shyly. "But now it's different."

Susan drew close to Rose and touched her

hand gently. "We know about 'Brothers and Sisters' now," she said. "You told in the letter when you sent us the box of lovely Christmas things that we were all like brothers and sisters together, because we had one Father. So we are n't going to be afraid of you any more. You were so kind to us!"

"Oh, that's all right," said Kenneth awkwardly, for he hated to be thanked. "We didn't do anything. But it will be fine to have a big band of Indians and Pirates. Shall we play Indian now?"

"Yes!" they all cried, dancing up and down like real little Indians. And so they played together. Tommy was the Indian chief, and Rose, Bill, and little Jane were in his band. Kenneth was Hawkeye, the famous Indian hunter, with Mary for his trusty guide, and Susan and Bob were his scouts.

All that morning the foggy forest rang with the sound of war whoops and the shouts of victorious hunters, as the fights raged about the wigwam. It was great fun. The Indian

chief knew the woods so well that he could find his way everywhere, even in the thick fog. Hawkeye would have had a hard time trying to find him but for the service of his brave scouts. As it was, they had some narrow escapes from being scalped. But they finally captured Jane-Little-Injun as their prisoner.

By this time they knew, because of their hungriness, that it must be noon. So they called a parley with the Indians, and smoked a peace pipe—Susan found one growing in the forest.

“I suppose we must go home,” said Kenneth, with a sigh. Then his face fell. The fog was thicker than ever, and he knew that he could never find his way home. He hated to confess it to the Indian chief. But Tommy Prout was a thoughtful Indian.

“We have smoked the peace pipe,” he said. “Now we Indians will go with Hawkeye and his braves and show you the quick trail home.”

And back through the fog they went in

Indian file, talking and laughing and telling one another about things which were so different in the city and on the Island; for the little Prouts were full of eager questions about the city, which they had never seen, while Kenneth and Rose were just as anxious to know what the Island was like in the winter.

When they reached the broad path by the back door, Tommy and the other Prout children said good-by, and started back to the Cove, because it was late, and their father and mother did not know where they were.

“Good-by,” said Kenneth and Rose.

“Don’t forget to come to-morrow to play with us again,” added Kenneth.

“Be sure and bring your dolls,” said Rose to the little girls. “And they shall all play with my Alice under the beech tree.”

You can imagine whether or not the little Prouts promised to come.

CHAPTER III

THE ANTS' FIRE-ESCAPE

IT was not quite bedtime; for they had tea early at the Island, so that after the fire was lighted in the big chimney the children might have a little hour with the grown-ups for a game or a story, or for whatever pleasant thing might happen.

Kenneth and Rose ran to get their fat cushions, and put them down in the two corners of the hearth. Kenneth's cushion was red, and he always sat on the right hand of the fireplace. Rose's cushion was blue, and she sat on the left.

Papa began to poke the fire to make it burn more brightly, for it was not so big and bustling a blaze as usual.

"Somebody forgot to fill the wood-box," he said. "We need a nice crisp birch log to make

the fire crackle. Who wants to run out to the wood-pile and bring one in?"

"I do!" cried Kenneth, jumping up eagerly.

"Oh, I do!" cried Rose, jumping up too.

"Well, you may both go," said Papa. "And between you I think you can bring in a good big one. But mind not to trip over it."

Out they ran to the wood-pile, which was close behind the house on the edge of the forest, where Rose suspected that the fairies lived, and where Kenneth was sure that there were Indians. But neither Kenneth nor Rose was afraid. They were very brave children, especially by daylight.

"Here is a nice little log," said Rose.

"Oh, that isn't half big enough," cried Kenneth scornfully. "Let's carry this one, Rose. This is something like;" and he seized one of the very largest logs in the wood-pile.

"All right," said Rose; and she bravely stretched her little arms around the other end. They tugged and they tugged, and they grunted and grunted, and they pulled and

pulled; and finally, after pushing and hauling and rolling and shoving it, they got the log up on to the piazza, where it fell with a *bang!* Out came their father and mother to see what all the noise meant.

“Mercy!” cried their mother. “How could you two children bring in such an enormous log as that? Aren’t your poor little backs broken?”

“I’m not so very small. I’m ten,” said Kenneth, drawing himself up.

“And I am seven,” said Rose proudly.

“Of course,” said their father; “it is good exercise for them, Mama, and will make them big and strong. Don’t you remember the story about the poor little girl who learned to carry a cow upstairs, and so the Prince married her?”

“Oh, how did she learn?” cried Rose eagerly. “Could I do it?”

“Why, you see, she carried the little calf upstairs every day — every day of its life. Of course it was growing all the time, so that before she knew it, the calf had become a big

cow, and the little girl was carrying the cow upstairs as easily as you please. Then the Prince came along and married her."

"That sounds like one of Aunt Clare's stories," said Rose.

"What did he want to marry her for?" asked Kenneth. "Princes' wives don't need to carry cows, do they?"

"Well, I forget the rest of the story," said Papa. "But there was a reason; a very good reason indeed, if I could only remember it. There always is a reason for things in fairy stories, isn't there, Rosie?"

"Yes, indeed!" said Rose. But Kenneth sniffed.

Papa seized the big log in both arms as easily as the Princess did the cow, carried it in and threw it on the fire, which spouted up with a burst of sparks, like a fiery fountain. The bark began to crackle deliciously. Rose and Kenneth cuddled down on their cushions, one on each side of the fire, and watched the little tongues of flame lick the old log greedily.

They loved the fire. Usually it made somebody think of a story.

Suddenly Rose cried out "Oh!" so loudly that even Kenneth jumped. Rose was pointing into the fire, and her forehead was puckered with distress.

"Why, what is it, Rose?" asked her mother.

"Oh, oh!" cried Rose again. "Oh, the poor little ants! Do look!"

Sure enough! the old log must have been an ants' house. The poor little things were creeping out of the holes in it and scurrying wildly about in every direction, seeking a way of escape from their dwelling, which was growing hotter and hotter every minute.

The foremost of them tried to climb down the andirons. But these were too hot, and soon they went scurrying back again. They grew wilder and wilder, wandering about crazily as if they did not know what to do. Their home was surrounded by flame on every side. Some of them tried to jump down. But

Rose shuddered to see the poor things fall into the fire or upon the hot hearth and shrivel up into sad little cinders. It was too dreadful!

“Oh, Mama and Papa, what shall we do?” she cried. “I cannot bear to see them. It is just like a house full of people being burned, with nobody to help. Kenneth, can't we do something?”

“Ding-dong! Call out the fire-engine!” roared Kenneth, jumping up and galloping to the kitchen for a pail of water. Kenneth was always ready for a new game.

“Water will do no good. You cannot put out the fire without drowning them,” called Kenneth's father. “I am afraid the poor ants are doomed, Rosie. It is like a crowded tenement house, is n't it?” he said to Mama. “The poor little creatures crowd together like people in the upper-story windows, hoping for a ladder.”

“That is what they need — a fire-escape,” cried Rose. “Oh, I must make a fire-escape quickly!”

She ran to the wood-box and seized a long, flat piece of wood. This she took for her fire-escape, resting one end on the rug in front of the hearth, and the other on top of the log which had now caught fire and was blazing briskly. It made a nice little bridge from the burning wood above the hot hearthstone. Almost immediately an ant spied the fire-escape and started across it eagerly. Another followed him; then another and another, until a constant procession was filing down the bridge toward safety.

“Hurrah!” cried Rose, as the first ant reached the rug; but she stopped suddenly. “Look at him!” she cried. “He is going *back!*”

Sure enough, back he was going, — back to the burning log. And all the other ants were doing the same thing. One after another they returned up the fire-escape, stopping to wave their feelers and make signs to all the ants whom they met coming down. They must have told these last something to make

them change their minds; for every single one turned about as soon as he was told. Presently it was plain what they meant. The ants were coming out in crowds, and each was carrying something white in its mouth.

“The ant babies! They are trying to save the ant babies!” cried Rose. And that is exactly what they were doing. Eagerly the children watched the crowds running down the fire-escape with their precious burdens. Faster and faster they came, and the hearth-rug was black with them when Papa took it up gently and carried it out to shake it over the piazza railing. How glad the poor little ants must have been to feel the cool grass under their feet!

They were all saved at last, and it was high time, for the log was now one mass of flame.

“I think you should have a fireman’s medal for life-saving, Rose,” said her mother.

“Oh, *I* ought not to have a medal,” said Rose modestly. “I only built the fire-escape. But every one of those brave ants who came

back into the fire and saved the babies ought to have one."

"Yes, we should call them Heroes if they had been men," said Papa.

"They would rather have something sweet than a medal," said Kenneth, who knew a great deal about sweet things.

"Sure enough!" cried Rose, clapping her hands. "Mama, may I scatter some sugar out there in the grass where Papa shook the ants?"

Her mother said that she might. So I dare say the rescued ants had a jolly banquet that night to celebrate their wonderful escape. But I suppose that the ant babies were too little to share in it.

CHAPTER IV

BEECH HOUSE

BRIGHT and early the next morning a small procession came up the path to Sweetbrier Cottage. It was the little Prouts, making their first real visit to the Thornton children. Tom and Mary led the way. It was the second time they had come that morning. Once, before daylight, they had traveled over the same path to bring the milk for Kenneth's and Rose's breakfast. But they did not mind an extra walk of a mile or two. Behind Mary and Tom came Susan, holding little Jane by the hand, and after them trotted Bill and Bob. The three girls carried each a doll, dressed in her prettiest clothes.

It was a great event for the little Prouts. They were rather frightened when they found the piazza empty and no one anywhere to be

seen. They had hoped that Kenneth and Rose would be outside waiting for them. That would have made them a little less bashful. They did not know what to do next, so they gathered in a bunch and began to whisper.

“You must knock on the door, Tom,” said Mary.

“No, *you* do it,” said Tom, hanging back.

“Let’s all go together, then,” whispered Mary, looking timidly at the front steps; for she remembered how once she had been frightened at this same place by the ringing of a terrible bell. So all the little Prouts took hold of hands and advanced in a crowd. But just as they were going to mount the steps the door swung open, and out came Mrs. Thornton with the baby in her arms. From the window she had seen the little Prouts coming. She smiled at them kindly and said, —

“Good-morning, little neighbors. I am very glad to see you. I suppose you are looking for Kenneth and Rose, aren’t you? Well, they are expecting you, and they are waiting down



THE LITTLE PROUTS COME TO MAKE THEIR FIRST CALL

under the beech tree. Come, and I will show you the way."

They followed Mrs. Thornton down the green slope, around big rocks and under the pine trees on top of the cliff, until they came to a huge beech tree, the only one on the Island.

"This is the place," said Mrs. Thornton. The little Prouts could dimly see somebody moving about beyond the green wall of leaves. But no one came to meet them. "We must let them know that we are here," explained Mrs. Thornton, and she pulled down a branch of the beech tree which was in front of her. On the end dangled a tin horn.

"This is the way visitors do when they come to Beech House," she said. Then she blew a long blast on the horn. "Now a little one for the baby," she added, blowing again, very softly. "There, Tommy, now it is your turn. You must each blow, so that they may know how many guests to expect."

Tommy blew the horn so loudly that Mrs.

Thornton jumped. Then Mary blew, then Susan, and Bill, and Bob. Last of all, little Jane blew. But she scarcely made any sound at all.

When the echo of all these blowings had died away, Kenneth and Rose lifted up the branch and looked out.

“Welcome, eight strangers!” said Kenneth, bowing very low.

“Welcome to Beech House,” said Rose, making a neat courtesy. Then they led their visitors in, — all but Mrs. Thornton and the baby, who said they must go back to the house.

The little Prouts followed Kenneth and Rose into Beech House, and a fine house it was! The great beech tree arched over like an enormous umbrella. On every side the branches came down close to the ground, so that the children were shut in by green walls, like a tent. This was Rose’s summer-house, where her dolls lived. Kenneth often played here, too.

The little Prouts stared around them with grins of delight. Beech House was all

ready for a party. In the centre of the room stood a little table, spread with a cloth and set with dishes for eight people. About it were several little chairs. Over in the corner was another table, even tinier, and set with still smaller dishes. At the head of this table sat Alice, Rose's best doll, and beside her was Matilda, with the broken nose, whom Rose loved almost as dearly as she loved Alice.

"We thought we would have a party," said Kenneth, "because this is the first time you ever came to see us."

"And, of course, the dolls had to have another party to welcome your dolls," added Rose. "Come, Alice, and greet your little new friends."

Rose brought Alice forward, and she shook hands with the three dolls which Mary, Susan, and little Jane had brought. Now these were the very same dolls which Rose had sent to the little Prouts in the Christmas box, before she had ever spoken a word to Mary or Susan or Jane. So Rose was really better acquainted

with the dolls, and with their dresses which she had made, than she was with the Prout girls themselves.

“How do you do? How do you do? How do you do?” said Alice three times (in Rose’s voice). “Come and sit down at the table near my dear sister Matilda, who has only one leg, so that she cannot rise to greet you very conveniently.”

Then the Teddy Bear was introduced. Rose loved him too, but in a different way. He wore a red sweater and a tam-o’-shanter cap. He shook hands with the Prout dolls very politely, and squeaked “How!” like an Indian. The little Prouts had never before seen a Teddy Bear, and at first they were afraid of him, because they thought he was alive. Rose put Teddy at the foot of the table, as he was the only boy in the party.

When Teddy and the five dolls were seated at their table, Rose and the other little girls went back to where Kenneth was showing the boys his camera and his tool-chest.

“Let’s play Desert Island,” said Kenneth. “That is our favorite game. I am Robinson Crusoe and Rose is my Man Friday. Let’s play you are the Swiss Family Robinson, come to have dinner with us. One, two, three, four, five, six, — yes, you are just the right number! You can be Mr. and Mrs. Robinson and their four sons. Isn’t that splendid, Rose?”

“Splendid!” echoed Rose, clapping her hands. “Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, will you and your children please be seated?”

There were only four chairs, and these were rather small ones. So Kenneth and Tom, Mary and Rose, sat cross-legged on the ground. Their chins came just above the edge of the table, which made everybody laugh.

“Now, Man Friday,” said Robinson Crusoe, “bring on the banquet.”

Friday ran to the little cupboard in the corner. It was such a cunning little cupboard that Mary said: “Oh, how did you ever think of building one like that? It is so easy, too!”

“My Mama used to make them so when she was a little girl,” said Rose. “She showed me how. See, it is just two bricks with a shingle laid across; then two more bricks on top, and another shingle; and up, up, up, as many shelves as you like. I have seven, and they are very convenient.”

“We must build one in the wigwam,” said Mary.

“Yes; that must be your Swiss Family Robinson house, if this is our Crusoe one,” said Kenneth.

Then Man Friday served the party. There was bread and butter spread with marmalade, and there were cookies and chocolate fudge, and lemonade in a tall pitcher. It was a very jolly party. Every one was happy. The Prouts laughed all the time. You see, it was their very first party!

When the Crusoe dinner was over, Kenneth had still more things to show the Prout boys, and the girls were just as much interested. There was the express wagon, in which the

provisions had been drawn down from Sweetbrier Cottage. But in places where the path was too narrow, they had been obliged to carry it over the rocks in their arms. Rose told how they had tipped over and wasted one whole pitcher of lemonade!

Then there was the ring-toss game and the animal circus. How the little Prouts did enjoy the jointed animals, and the clown, and the funny things which Kenneth and Rose made them do! Fancy it! the little Prouts had never seen a real circus! Kenneth and Rose could hardly believe how any one could be so unfortunate. But the little Prouts said that they had never been away from the Island, and of course the circus never came to the Island, it was so far away from everywhere.

Rose and Kenneth said to themselves that, after all, there are some unfortunate things about living on an island.

CHAPTER V

MUTINY

WHILE the little ones were still playing with the clown, the elephant, and the donkey, Mary and Tom went about Beech House looking at other things.

“What a queer flag!” cried Mary suddenly. “It is not a bit like the Stars and Stripes.” She was pointing to something tied to a stick which stood against the tree-trunk. It was a flag of black silk, and on it was painted a skull with two bones crossed below it.

“Why, don’t you know?” said Kenneth, “that is a pirate flag. We always use it whenever we play pirates.”

“What are pirates?” asked Mary.

“Oh, pirates are sea-robbers,” explained Kenneth. “They used to sail all around the

world in fast ships, and they captured other sailors and killed them. Then they took their treasures and buried them in places where no one else could find them. Papa says that perhaps they hid some of their treasure down here in Maine. Did you ever find any pirate gold, Tom?"

"No," said Tom. "But I never looked for any. Perhaps if I had known I might have found it. I'll hunt for it some day."

"We'll all hunt for it!" said Kenneth.

"We played 'Buried Treasure' last summer," said Rose. "Aunt Clare showed me how. It is a very good game for a sandy beach, and I found ten cents."

"Oh!" cried Susan Prout eagerly. Ten cents seemed to her a great deal of money.

"Pooh!" said Kenneth. "That was a silly game. We will go and find real treasure, — gold and jewels and things like that. And we will be rich as anything."

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom. Bill and Bob echoed, "Hurrah!"

“First we’ll form a pirate band,” went on Kenneth. “Now there are so many of us it will be jolly to play pirate. I’ll be Bloody Dick. Tom, you can be Slippery Joe. We will think up names for all the little ones, — and for the girls, too. The girls will have to play so that we can have a good big band.”

“Of course we shall play!” said Rose stoutly. “We shall be the best pirates of all, shan’t we, Mary?”

And Mary said, “Perhaps, when we know how.”

“I say, Tom, you know where the pirate cave is, don’t you?” asked Kenneth.

“You mean the cave down by Black Rock?” asked Tom. “We don’t call it that, though. We call it just ‘The Oven.’”

“Pirate Cave is a much better name,” said Kenneth. “Well, Mama says that we can have a picnic there some day. We children will all be pirates, and the cave is our den. Papa and Mama and the baby will be just ordinary sailors with a treasure, — that’s the

luncheon, of course. And we will capture them and take them to the cave. Then we will have the picnic. Won't that be fine?"

"Fine!" cried Tom. "That will be a great game."

"We must all have black masks like this," said Kenneth; and he clapped to his face a bit of black cloth with two holes, through which his eyes glowed fiercely.

The littlest Prouts began to scream. "Stop that!" said Tom. "If you are going to bawl you can't be pirates. You will have to go with the luncheon and be robbed."

Bill and Bob and Jane were silent immediately. They felt that it would be terrible not to be pirates.

"Yes, we must all have masks and swords, and red handkerchiefs tied around our necks, and turbans, just like real pirates," said Kenneth. "See, I have a tin sword."

"I think I can make the masks," said Mary, who had been examining Kenneth's. "I can sew a little, can't you, Rose?"

“Oh, yes,” said Rose, thinking of the dolls’ dresses which she had made. “I can sew a great deal.”

“And I can whittle,” said Tommy Prout. “I will make wooden swords for all of us.”

“So can I,” said Kenneth. “I have a jolly jack-knife—a real pirate ripper!” and he flourished it in the air.

“Who will be captain?” said Rose suddenly. “I suppose there has to be a captain?”

“Oh, yes,” said Kenneth. “Of course there must be a captain, to tell everybody what to do.”

“*You* be captain, Kenneth,” said Rose, who admired her brother more than anything in the world. Kenneth brandished his sword and cried “Ho!” ferociously, as though he were indeed a pirate chief.

“Tommy is the biggest,” said Susan jealously.

“Yes, Tommy’s the biggest,” echoed Bill and Bob.

“Well, I know the Island pretty well,” said

Tom. "I can sail a boat, too. I guess I'll make a good pirate, though I never played the game before."

"But the captain ought to know all about it," said Kenneth uneasily. "You know you had never heard about pirates until I told you."

"Well, I know *now*," said Tommy, flushing; "so what's the difference? Do you want to be everything?"

"No, I don't!" retorted Kenneth. "Yesterday I let you be the Indian chief."

"Yes, but you were Hawkeye, the famous hunter. That was just as good, was n't it?" answered Tom.

"Well, if any one else is the pirate chief, I shall not let him wear my sword," declared Kenneth.

"Stingy!" said Susan.

"I'll whittle a better one!" Tom cried triumphantly.

"I'm going home," said Susan. "I shan't play unless Tom is the chief."

“Go along, then!” said Rose, pouting.

Little Jane began to cry. Bill and Bob doubled up their fists and looked very fierce.

“Oh, don’t let us quarrel!” said Mary, in distress. And, indeed, it looked as though there was to be trouble in Beech House.

“Let’s go home, Mary,” said Tom sullenly. “We are n’t wanted here any longer.”

Kenneth stood with arms folded, kicking the grass sulkily. Suddenly there came a tremendous blow on the horn,—so loud that everybody jumped, and Rose whispered in blood-curdling tones the awful word “*Pirates!*” But Kenneth soon remembered who he was, and that Robinson Crusoe was never afraid of anything, not even of cannibals.

“What ho!” he called bravely. “What stranger seeks entrance to my house?” and he strode to the door brandishing his sword. Suddenly he gave a whoop of joy.

“Charlie!” he cried. “Charlie Carroll! Where did you come from?”

“It’s a surprise!” said another voice, and

in came Kenneth with a boy of about the same age, who was grinning all over his jolly freckled face. Rose flew at him rapturously.

“Cousin Charlie!” she squealed. “Oh, how nice!”

“Hello, Rose!” the boy said. “Having a party?”

“They are the little Prouts,” whispered Rose. “You remember, we told you about them.”

“He is my cousin, Charlie Carroll,” explained Kenneth to the Prout children. “I say, Charlie, why didn’t you tell us you were coming? Are you going to stay?”

“Yes, I have come to stay four weeks,” said Charlie. “Aunt Mollie asked me, and it was to be a secret.”

“Oh, goodie, goodie!” cried Rose, hopping up and down. “What fine times we shall have now!”

“I came up on the boat last night with Aunt Clare,” said Charlie. “Uncle Jack met us at the wharf this morning, and when Aunt

Mollie said you kids were all down here I ran away and came as softly as I could so as to surprise you."

"Aunt Clare here, too! Oh, what fun!" cried Rose.

"You came just in time to be a pirate," said Kenneth.

"Oh, yes! you will be a pirate too, won't you, Charlie?" said Rose, clapping her hands.

"Pirates!" cried Charlie. "That sounds fine. I'll be Bulldog Bill."

"Hurrah!" cheered Kenneth. "We are to have swords and masks, Charlie, and capture a treasure and live in a cave."

"But we have n't chosen a captain yet," said Rose. "Kenneth and Tom both want to be captain, and we nearly quarreled about it before you came."

The children suddenly looked very much ashamed. "I don't want to be captain, Tom," said Kenneth. "You'll do it better. Here, you can have my sword."

"No," said Tom, "I won't take it. You

be captain. You know all about the game and I don't."

Then Mary Prout had a great idea. "*You* be pirate chief," she said, turning to Charlie. "That will settle the trouble."

"Oh, yes, that is a good idea!" cried Rose. "We will all do as you say, Charlie."

"Oh, I have just come," said Charlie. "I don't want to be chief the very first thing."

"I'll agree," said Kenneth. "What do you say, Tom?"

"All right," assented Tom. "I don't care. He'll make a good pirate, I guess."

"Of course he will!" cried Rose promptly. "Charlie is great fun."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Charlie modestly. "I'll be captain first, so as to settle things easily. But after that we'll take turns. Now let's plan what we will do first."

"All right!" they cried in chorus. Then they sat down on the grass and told Charlie about the adventure which they had planned before he came. And the new captain said it

was a very good plan indeed, and that they would carry it out at the first chance.

So the tea-party ended happily after all, and a mutiny among the pirate band was averted.

CHAPTER VI

THE PIRATE CAVE

ONE morning, a week after the tea-party, Mr. and Mrs. Thornton and Aunt Clare went for a row on the water. They had two large baskets packed full to overflowing with something precious. They also took a stone jug and a coffee-pot. It looked like a picnic party. They were very merry, as if they expected to have a pleasant time; and yet, it may be that they had some idea of the danger into which they were about to run, for they did not take the baby with them.

There was no one in sight when they rowed away from the landing. This was strange; for usually there were half a dozen children, more or less, in that neighborhood. Quite recently stories had been told about a band of pirates who had been seen prowling about the coast.

Was it possible that these ruffians had anything to do with the children's disappearance? Mr. and Mrs. Thornton seemed, however, to have forgotten all about pirate stories, and they rowed merrily away.

“Why, this might indeed be a desert island,” said Aunt Clare, as they rounded point after point with no sign of a house or a human being. They passed several little coves and cliffs, the bathing beach and the chasm, and presently they came in sight of a larger cove with a flat, stony beach. Beyond this a rock extended out into the water like a platform. At the back rose a steep cliff, with a black cavity in the centre.

“There is the cave, up under that rock,” said Mr. Thornton, as the boat grated on the beach.

“Oh, what a splendid place for a picnic!” cried Aunt Clare, jumping out lightly. “Do be careful not to upset those baskets; I am dreadfully hungry already, and I don't want to lose a mouthful of the delicious luncheon which Mollie has prepared.”

Mr. Thornton helped out his wife and pulled the empty boat up on the beach, where the tide could not wash it away. "Now, then," said he, "I'll take the pail of lobsters and one of the baskets. Mama, you can take the other basket. Clare, will you carry the jug and the coffee-pot, please? Forward, march! To the cave!"

Aunt Clare began to hum a tune, and they all marched along in time to it, carrying the luncheon carefully; but just as they were about to enter the cave there came a terrible sound, — a chorus of screams and shouts and shrill whistles, — and a band of fierce and desperate ruffians came rushing out of the cave where they had been hidden, surrounding the unfortunate picnickers.

These desperadoes were very dreadful to look at. They wore black masks covering all their faces except their eyes, and some of them had long, black beards. They carried swords and pistols, which they brandished in a very dangerous manner. One of them waved a fearful

black flag, with a skull and crossbones painted upon it.

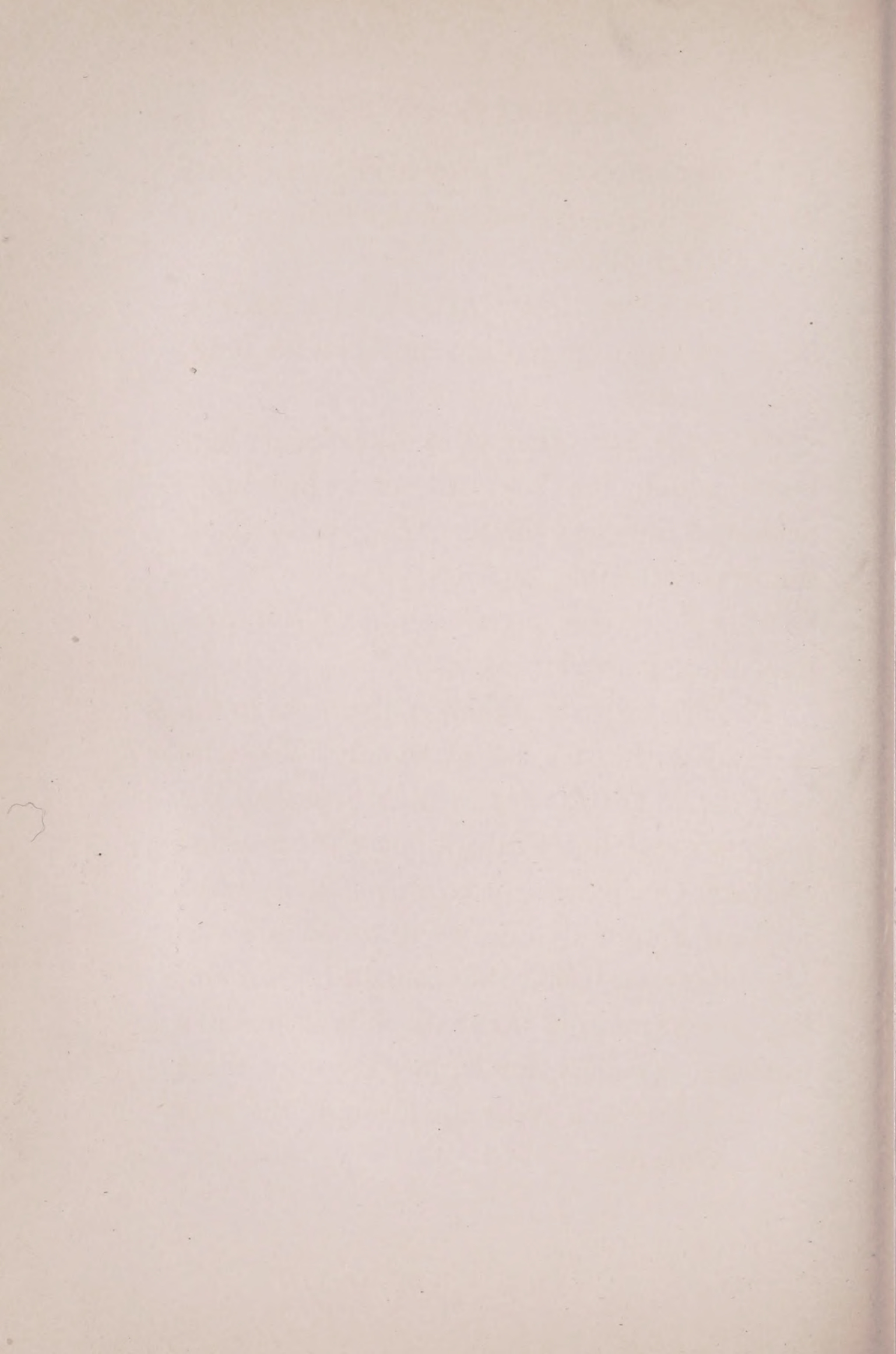
“Pirates!” gasped Aunt Clare. “We are lost!”

“Pirates we are!” shouted the leader of the band, in a terrible voice. “What are you doing near our cave? I am Bloody Dick, and you are our prisoners. Hand over your treasure and come along to our captain, Bulldog Bill. Then we’ll see what will happen to you next!”

There was nothing to do but yield, for the pirates were eight to three. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton quickly handed over their baskets and the pail,—Aunt Clare groaned when she saw these treasures seized by the pirates. Then, after a struggle, she herself was forced to give up the jug and the coffee-pot. Bloody Dick and Slippery Joe, the biggest of the band, tied the hands of the prisoners with a piece of rope, while the others danced about shouting and screaming more like wild Indians than like pirates.



THE PIRATES ATTACK THE PICNIC PARTY



“Now come along!” growled Bloody Dick, “and step lively, or the Captain will make you all walk the plank.”

“What’s ‘walk the plank’?” whispered one of the pirates in pigtails to another with long, yellow curls.

“Charlie says that it is like the spring-board which the boys use in swimming,” answered the curly pirate. “But that doesn’t sound very terrible, does it?”

“No,” said the pigtailed one. “But perhaps there is something more.”

The procession marched up the rocks to the entrance of the cave, led by Bloody Dick, who held the end of the rope which bound all the prisoners together, while Slippery Joe guarded the rear. One by one the prisoners were pushed in, bent almost double, for the opening was low. But once inside, they found a high room, big enough to hold them all. It was shadowy but not very dark, for besides the door there was a hole which went up through the roof like a chimney.

“Oh, what a fine cave!” cried Aunt Clare, forgetting that she was a prisoner.

“Sh!” warned Bloody Dick. Kenneth looked so fierce in a tarpaulin hat and long rubber boots, with his belt stuck full of Fourth-of-July pistols, that Aunt Clare almost trembled. “Silence, till our Captain speaks!” he commanded.

There was no captain in sight, but presently there was a sound of scratching, puffing, snorting in the chimney. The pirate captain, like Santa Claus, was coming down from the roof.

There was a slip and a rattle of stones, and with a thump he tumbled into the middle of the cave. It was not quite the entrance he had planned, and the first word of the chief was an “Ow!” of pain. For a minute he did not rise, but sat rubbing some injured spot upon his person. Then he reached for his sword, which he had lost in the fall, and sprang fiercely to his feet, a majestic figure (Charlie was a tall boy for ten years).

The pirate chief wore a great slouch hat

pulled down over his mask, below which hung a beard of curly black wool. A yellow handkerchief was knotted about his throat. He wore a red sweater, with a skull and crossbones on the breast, fringed leggings, and his belt bristled with knives, daggers, and pistols, to say nothing of the huge tin sword which he brandished fiercely. He truly was a terrible figure. Little Jane trembled and clung close to Sue when he hissed through his teeth:—

“Well, my hearties, whom have we here? Bulldog Bill thirsts for vengeance and for gold!”

“Captain,” said Bloody Dick, “these are land-lubbers who were coming to our cave. We have captured them and their treasure, which looks valuable. What shall we do with them?”

“Let the prisoners die,” said the captain, in a blood-curdling voice. “Let them walk the plank; but we will keep the treasure.”

With a scream Aunt Clare threw herself on her knees before the pirate captain. “Oh,

good Captain Bulldog," she said, "spare us! we are so young and innocent. One of us has a dear little baby at home who will feel so sad to lose us! Take our treasure, if you will, but spare our lives. Yonder coffee-pot is solid tin, and so are the knives and spoons. Let such a prize content you!"

Aunt Clare pretended to cry so pitifully that the three smallest pirates began to boohoo with sympathy, until Slippery Dick whispered: —

"Sh! You kids! She's only pretending. Don't you know it's all play?"

Bulldog Bill listened to the prisoner's words, but shook his head. "It is not enough," he said. "What will you do for us besides?"

"We will be your slaves," said Aunt Clare. "We will prepare your dinner."

Still the captain shook his head. "Can't you do something else?" he asked.

Aunt Clare had an idea. "I will tell you a story," she said.

"Ha! that is good!" exclaimed the captain.

“You shall tell us a tale, but it must be one that we have never heard before. If you do this we will set you free.”

“Give me time to think, and I will promise to tell you a tale which you never heard before,” said Aunt Clare.

“Very good,” growled Bulldog Bill. “Loose the prisoners’ bonds so that they can prepare our meal. But guard them well so that they cannot escape.”

Bloody Dick and Slippery Joe untied the prisoners’ hands, while the other pirates guarded the entrance of the cave.

“Now, then,” said the pirate captain, “we are hungry. Let us dine at once. Prisoners, prepare the food!”

“It is too early for luncheon,” said Mrs. Thornton. But the pirates began to clamor. Aunt Clare sided with them.

“Let them have their way,” she begged. “Hungry pirates are very dangerous! Besides, I confess that I am half starved myself.”

“Well, then, we must have a fire,” said

Mrs. Thornton. "Who will gather wood for the fire?"

"Let the four youngest pirates do that," said the captain. So Jane, Bill, Bob, and Rose went out to hunt for driftwood on the beach. Presently they were running in and out like ants, bringing it by armfuls.

"We must have water," said Mrs. Thornton. "Who will go to the spring for it?"

"Let me go," said Sue.

"No, the jug will be heavy. Let Slippery Joe fetch the water," commanded the captain. So Slippery Joe went forth. "We others will examine the treasure," said the captain. The remaining four, Charlie, Kenneth, Mary, and Sue, sat down on the ground and began to unpack the baskets which had come in the boat. And as they unwrapped one after another of the good things, they smacked their lips and squealed with delight. They were so interested in the treasure that they forgot all about their prisoners. But suddenly they heard a shout from outside the cave: —

“ Catch him ! He ’s running away ! ”

The pirates jumped to their feet. Mrs. Thornton was bending over the fire, doing things with the coffee-pot, and Aunt Clare was taking the lobsters to pieces. But Mr. Thornton had disappeared.

Bulldog Bill and his men rushed to the door echoing the shout of “ Catch him ! catch him ! ” When they were outside they saw the four other pirates racing along the beach towards the spot where the runaway was disappearing over the top of the cliff. The whole band started in pursuit, leaving Mama and Aunt Clare quite alone ; so that these prisoners might have escaped, too, had they tried. But they were so interested in preparing dinner that they forgot all about it. Just like women !

After a long time the pirates returned, flushed, panting, and tired, but without their prisoner.

“ Papa ran so fast we could not catch him, ” explained Rose to her Mama. “ He ran away into the woods, and we could n’t find him. Oh,

Mama! I'm afraid now he won't be here for dinner!" Rose looked distressed.

"Silence, Burly Ben!" said the captain sternly. "This is no fit talk for one of Bulldog Bill's bloody band! — My! how good that cocoa smells! Is dinner almost ready, Aunt Clare? I never was so hungry in my life. Can't I have just one little lobster claw to chew?"

Aunt Clare had not spread the tablecloth in the cave, for that would have been too dark and too crowded for every one to be comfortable. But the flat rock out in front of the cave made a fine table, with room for every one to sit cross-legged around it in pirate fashion. Each person had a big, round scallop-shell for a plate, with a tin cup of cocoa beside it, and such a lovely luncheon was spread on the white cloth as the little Prouts at least had never before seen. They all sat down together, prisoners and pirates, and the pirates forgot for a time that they were anything but hungry girls and boys.

“It is too bad that Papa is n’t here,” said Mrs. Thornton.

“Too bad!” echoed Kenneth and Rose sorrowfully.

But before many minutes they heard a sound of some one scrambling down the cliff close by, and presently Mr. Thornton himself crept sheepishly up to the group.

“Please, Mr. Pirate Captain,” he said, “may I come back to dinner? When I ran away I forgot about Aunt Clare’s story. I don’t mind starving to death, as I came very near doing on this desert island, but I could not bear to lose the story. Let me dine and hear the tale, then I will walk the plank gladly.”

“Have you any ransom?” asked the pirate chief, taking a huge bite of sandwich.

Mr. Thornton slapped his pockets doubtfully. Then his face brightened. “Yes! I do happen to have one bit of treasure about me which you did not take away,” he said. “You forgot, I think, to go through my pockets.”

He drew out a bag of peanuts and handed it to Bulldog Bill, then seized a sandwich in each hand. "Fair exchange!" he cried. The children set up a shout of delight.

"It is a good treasure," said Bulldog Bill approvingly, as he helped himself.

"I would have starved rather than eat them," said Mr. Thornton, with a sad voice. "I bought them as a present for my innocent children at home. But since I have fallen into the power of this pirate crew you must do with them as you think best."

Now the pirates knew what it was best to do with peanuts; and they did it. When every one had eaten all he possibly could, the captain suddenly remembered that he was a pirate. He put on his tarpaulin hat, and seizing his sword, said sternly to Aunt Clare:—

"It is now time for the story. Prisoner, begin; but beware how you tell us one which we have heard before. If it is a chestnut you shall die."

"Fierce Captain," said Aunt Clare, "did

you ever hear the tale called 'The Pirate Hoard'?"

"No," said Captain Bulldog, "I never did. Has any one here ever heard this tale?" And every one answered, "No!"

"I thought not," said Aunt Clare.

"Very good," said the captain; "go on with the story."

And this is the story which Aunt Clare told.

CHAPTER VII

THE PIRATE HOARD

THIS is a story of Captain Kidd, who was, you know, the greatest pirate of them all in old times.

One day this terrible fellow was cruising about in these very waters, with a ship full of gold and jewels and precious things which he had stolen. You see, he wanted to find a new place in which to bury this particular treasure. He was always hiding things. He buried his different hoards all along the coast from Maine to Mexico, just as squirrels hide their nuts wherever it is convenient. You can scarcely find any place, however tiny, which has not a story that Captain Kidd's treasure is buried somewhere near. Like the squirrels, Captain Kidd often went away and forgot about his treasure, and never returned to dig it up.

Well, Captain Kidd was cruising along this coast, with his ship full of treasure. He had been enjoying great luck on his last voyage. That means, of course, that a great many other people had been most unlucky. In those days about the unluckiest thing that could happen to anybody was to meet Captain Kidd on the high seas. Pirates were such greedy, cruel fellows, — I beg your pardon! I forgot that nearly every one here is a pirate. How careless of me!

Captain Kidd was a long way from shore when he ran into a fog, — a thick Maine fog; the kind that Islanders know so well. It was so thick that one could scarcely see a ship's length ahead. All of a sudden the pirate lookout called to the captain: —

“Sail ahead!” and sure enough! out of the fog loomed a sailing vessel, so near that the two bowsprits were almost touching.

Now, this stranger was a fishing-boat named the Mary Ann. She was a Maine fishing-boat, like your father's, Tom Prout, and she was on

her way home from the Banks with a cargo of fish. The captain, whose name was Tobey, was frightened out of his wits when he saw the black flag flying at the mast of Captain Kidd's vessel. Of course, he knew what this meant. If he were captured by the pirate ship he should never see his home and dear little children again. So he put about, and the Mary Ann scuttled away for dear life, without stopping to say "Howdy."

When Captain Kidd saw the other boat go about, he grinned a dreadful grin and said, —

"Oho! You are running away, are you? Well, that must mean that you have some precious treasure aboard. Let's after them, my hearties, and give them a chase."

You see, he was greedy as well as cruel. Already he had more treasure than he knew what to do with, but he longed for more. This was just like a pirate — I beg your pardon, Captain Bulldog! I forgot again.

Now began an exciting chase through the fog. The little Mary Ann was a fast boat, and

for a time she kept ahead of the pirate ship, which could barely see her scudding like a sea-gull through the fog. But finally poor Captain Tobey saw that the pirate ship was gaining on him, and his heart sank. Alas! what could he do? He thought of his children at home, and the tears filled his eyes.

Suddenly he had an idea! He knew every rock and shoal in the bay, which was full of rocks and shoals. He remembered that there must be a reef close by, a reef which came almost to the surface of the sea. Until one was quite close he would not see it, hidden by this fog. Captain Tobey steered straight for the place where he knew that reef must be, straight to a froth of white foam.

The pirate ship followed where he led and came on, gaining every minute. Now Captain Tobey held his breath. They were in the waves that broke upon the reef! But the *Mary Ann* went safely over without touching, because she was so small. And the big vessel flying the black flag came close after her.

Crash! Smash! "Hurrah!" came a shout from the Mary Ann. "Hurrah! Good-by!" The pirate ship was stuck fast on the reef, and the waves were beating her to pieces. But Captain Tobey did not wait to see what happened. He was too eager to get home to his wife and babies. The Mary Ann disappeared silently through the fog, scudding towards a harbor miles away.

But there was excitement indeed on board the pirate ship. The pirates went running to and fro, shouting and waving their arms, crazy with fear. They tumbled into the long boats as fast as they could, without thinking anything about their treasure, only of their precious lives. But Captain Kidd was different. He cared more for his treasure than for anything.

"The mate and I will shift for ourselves!" he shouted. "Leave my boat!" He knew he could not save everything, there was such a vast deal of gold and silver and heavy plate in the ship. But he ran to his own cabin and

brought out a little wooden box bound in iron. It was full of the most precious treasure of all, — diamonds and rubies, sapphires and emeralds, and precious stones of every color.

With this chest under his cloak he got into the boat, and his mate, One-Eyed Pete, rowed him away. The fog was so thick that they soon lost sight of the other boat. A storm was rising; the wind blew so loud and the waves roared so terribly that they could not hear any answer to their calls. They had to be very careful of the rocks and reefs on which the waves broke fiercely, and they rowed on and on for hours before they found a place where they could land.

But at last they came to a safer shore, with an inlet and a smooth beach. They landed, and soon discovered that this was a very little desert island.

“This will be just the place to bury the treasure,” said Captain Kidd. “Let us do so before we meet any one who may try to take it from us.”

“Right, Captain,” growled One-Eyed Pete.

So they dug a hole in the ground and buried the treasure, heaping a little mound over it. They knew that they should remember the spot, because there was close beside it a great big rock split open and lying in two pieces side by side, like a huge book spread flat upon its back.

Captain Kidd wrote down in his note-book a description of the place, and, as well as he knew, how they had come there. He drew besides a picture of the fog as a sample, so that he should recognize it again. For he said, — “I never saw such fog before, in all my life!” Which proves that all this must have happened close by where we are now.

Then One-Eyed Pete said, — “Cap’n, a terrible storm is coming on, and I think this here island is a poor place to be on; for the waves will roll right over it. Let’s row to the mainland, which can’t be far away.”

So they rowed away again, and after a long time spent in trying to find a landing-place,

they came to a harbor and a village. They pretended that they were shipwrecked sailors, so the good people took them in and gave them food. What would they have thought had they known it was the wicked Captain Kidd who was visiting them !

The storm lasted several days, but when it was over Captain Kidd said "good-by" politely, and with One-Eyed Pete went out on the first fishing-boat that left the harbor. Nobody discovered who they were. They exchanged passage into the first vessel they met, and were soon far over the seas.

After that Captain Kidd lived to have many wild adventures, and he forgot all about his treasure in the little iron-bound box on the desert Island. No one ever heard of the other pirates, who must have been drowned in the storm that night. The pirate ship went to pieces, and some bits of the treasure were washed ashore with its timbers, and the fishermen's children found them on the beach. But it is not known that any one ever found

the captain's jewels, and I dare say the box is there to this day. Just think, if only one could find it!

Aunt Clare ended her story with a sigh, echoed by all the little girls. "I wish I had some diamonds now," said Rose wistfully.

"Oh, so do I, — and rubies!" cried Mary.

"Is that all?" asked Kenneth and Charlie, in one breath.

"Is it true?" demanded Tom eagerly.

"'Course it is true," cried Charlie. "Did n't you ever hear of Captain Kidd?"

"I don't know for certain that it is all true," said Aunt Clare, "but it *might* be. There were pirates who buried their treasure in desert islands. Why, I've heard the fishermen of this very place tell that there was treasure buried around here somewhere. No one knows where."

"It might be this very same treasure!" cried Kenneth, "might n't it, Aunt Clare?"

“I suppose it might,” she answered, laughing.

The boys exchanged eager looks. They did not say anything about it then, but they each knew that they were resolved to find that pirate treasure if it was anywhere near the Island.

As for the little girls, they were helping to pack up the lunch baskets; for the released prisoners were now ready to go home, and some of the pirates were going with them.

CHAPTER VIII

TREASURE TROVE

ONE morning, about a week later, three of the pirates — Tom, Charlie, and Kenneth — got into a dory and rowed away from the harbor. It was Tom's own boat, of which he was very proud. He had spent all his life near and in and on the water, and he was a splendid boatman. Mr. Thornton was not afraid to let the children go with him in his dory, but he made them promise that never more than two should go with Tom at one time.

The pirates had with them in the boat three spades; they looked very sly, as though they were upon a secret errand. Tom was the leader in this adventure, and he seemed to know just where to go. They rowed around the Point and then straight out into the bay towards

a little rocky island, beyond the other islands. They followed the shore of it until they came to an inlet with a smooth beach beyond.

“This is the place,” said Tom, jumping out and pulling up the boat. “Come on, fellows!”

He raced up the beach followed by the other two, and climbed a bank. At the top was a spring of cool, clear water under a tree, and close beside it was a huge rock.

“Look at that!” cried Tom, pointing at the rock. “What do you think of that?”

The rock was split into two flat pieces, each almost square, which lay side by side. It looked like a great book spread open.

“It is the very rock that Aunt Clare told about in the story!” cried Charlie.

“Where is the mound?” asked Kenneth eagerly. “Oh, I see! This must be it.”

Sure enough! Close beside the rock and near the spring the ground swelled into a mound covered with grass.

“Of course this must be the place,” said Charlie excitedly. “How did you ever find it, Tom?”

“Well, when she was telling the story I remembered this island, and I thought it was just the place that the pirates would have come to first when they drifted in from sea ; so I rowed over to look at it. I found the cove was just as she had said, and sure enough ! there was the rock like a big book, and the mound. I knew this must be the place. I wanted to begin to dig right away, but I thought it would n't be fair without you fellows, 'cause you were the ones to tell me about pirates first.”

“Let's begin to dig now,” said Kenneth eagerly.

“Let's !” cried Charlie. So they ran down to the dory and got their spades. Then they all fell to work.

The mound was not hard like ordinary earth. When they had gone through the sod their spades struck something queer. Charlie

took some of it up in his hand. "Why, it's broken shells," he said.

"Clam shells!" exclaimed Kenneth, picking up two which were still unbroken. "The pirates must have had clams for their dinner, and have piled the shells on top of their treasure. Oh, hurry! this *proves* there is something here, does n't it?"

Eagerly they set to work again. It was amazing to see what a number of shells there were in that mound. It was made of nothing else. Down, down they dug until they had a hole as large as Tom's body. But still there was no sign of any treasure. Their spades tossed up broken shells and nothing more.

"My! Those two pirates must have had a big clambake all by themselves," said Charlie, pausing to wipe his streaming forehead.

"I suppose Captain Kidd was an awful eater," said Kenneth. "But I say, how could they finish so many clams?"

"Huh! I could eat half a barrel of steamed clams any day," protested Tom. "Those two

pirates were regular cannibals, I expect. Besides, they were eating on purpose to have shells enough to cover the treasure, don't you see?"

Once more they fell to work, and they dug for ten minutes without a word. But presently, with a sigh, they all three stopped again. It was a hot day and this was hard work.

"If we find the treasure we must give some to the girls," said Kenneth.

"Of course," agreed Tom. "They are pirates, too. The band will all have to share."

"Let's give each of the others three diamonds and three rubies and three sapphires and three emeralds," said Charlie, with sudden inspiration.

"All right," agreed Tom and Kenneth. "And we'll divide the rest equally among us three," added Kenneth.

Then they began work again. But still there was no sign of that iron-bound box. Their arms were growing very tired. They were

almost ready to give it up. Suddenly Kenneth stooped and picked up something.

“Hello!” he said. “What’s this?”

It was a small pointed stone, flat on both sides. The other two boys examined it eagerly. “Why, it looks like an Indian arrowhead,” said Charlie; “but how came it here?”

“Perhaps the pirates used bows and arrows too,” suggested Tom.

“That’s it!” cried Kenneth. “I’m almost sure they did. I remember once seeing an old picture of men fighting with bows and arrows, and they were not Indians. They must have been pirates. Hurrah! I guess we are near the treasure now!”

They dug down with new energy, tossing up the shell-earth like beavers. Presently Charlie stooped. “I’ve found something too,” he said; “but I don’t know what it is.” It was a curious round stone, hollow and smooth in the middle.

In a few minutes Tom stooped also. “Here’s something else,” he said, pulling out

a very long, three-sided stone roughly sharpened on one edge. "What do you suppose this is?"

"Maybe it is an anchor," suggested Kenneth. But it did not look much like an anchor. They worked for another ten minutes, then they stopped, for nothing else came to light.

"I don't think these are much," said Charlie, kicking the stone things with his foot. "I don't believe there is anything else here. These old shells go down and down, — to China, I guess. The pirates could n't have eaten so many clams, you know. Let's give it up."

"Yes, let's," agreed Kenneth, tossing away his spade and sitting down to rest. "I'm tired and I'm not going to dig any more."

"Oh, come! Don't give up so soon!" begged Tom. "I'm going to work awhile longer."

Charlie looked at his watch. "It is noon already," he said. "I'm hungry, and Aunt Mollie does n't like us to be late for dinner."



TOM, CHARLIE, AND KENNETH DIG FOR THE TREASURE

Let's go home. There isn't anything here but old stone things, and they are no good."

"The pirates left them," said Tom doggedly. "I'm going to work a little longer. Say, will you fellows dig for ten minutes more? Then if we don't find anything I'll agree to give it up."

"All right," said the other two.

Once more they set to work with tired arms. They dug and they dug through the dust of broken clam-shells, of which there seemed to be no end. But still there was no sign of the iron-bound box. It was very discouraging. All they found was a few more arrowheads and some knobby stones with grooves about the top. They were hardly worth picking up, it seemed. The boys tossed them aside in a little heap with the other stone things. Then they threw down their spades, rubbing their aching backs and arms. All these pains for nothing!

"It's no use," said Charlie. "There can't be anything here. We shall have to give it up."

“It is long after dinner time. Perhaps we shan’t get any, and they will scold us,” said Kenneth ruefully.

“Huh! Only a lot of old stone things!” growled Tom, kicking the heap spitefully. “They are n’t worth taking home, are they?”

“Oh, yes! We must show them all to father. Perhaps he can tell us what they are,” said Kenneth.

“Well, come on, then,” urged Charlie. “I wish we had gone an hour ago. I hate cold dinners. Oh, what a wasted morning!”

Tom lingered wistfully. “It looks just like a treasure place,” he said, “and I felt somehow as if we should find it here. There must be some mistake.”

“Oh, come on, Tom!” called the others impatiently; and he hurried down to the beach where they had carried the stone things. Soon they were rowing back to their own island. But they were very silent and sulky all the way. Their treasure hunt had not been a success, and they were hungry and cross. Tom

was the gloomiest of the three. He felt that they blamed him for their disappointment. But it had mattered most to him.

“I wanted to take home a handful of diamonds to Mary,” he said to himself. “How pleased she would be! Then we would all be rich. But I would give the handsomest diamond of all to Rose.”

Mr. Thornton was on the beach looking for them when they came in. He had been greatly worried because they had been gone so long; but he did not scold them when they told him what they had been doing.

“Tom thought that he had found Captain Kidd’s hiding-place, Papa,” said Kenneth wearily. “It looked just like the mound that Aunt Clare told us about; but there was n’t any treasure at all, only some old stone things in a heap of shells.”

“Stone things in a shell-heap?” asked Mr. Thornton, pricking up his ears. “What do you mean by that?”

“We brought these home, Uncle Jack,”

said Charlie, pulling out the stone things from under the seat of the dory.

“Hello! Some good Indian arrowheads and sinkers; a stone mortar for grinding corn; and this, — why! this is as fine an Indian plow as I ever saw. Which of you found this, boys?” cried Mr. Thornton excitedly.

“Tom found that,” said Kenneth without envy.

“Well, Tom, I must buy this of you. Boys, you have found a treasure indeed, though it is not the kind you were looking for. You must have come upon an Indian shell-mound, and I dare say there are still more things there to be discovered. But come now, you must be half starved. I know Mama and Aunt Clare are very anxious, — I dare say Tom’s mother is not the worrying kind. Let’s all go home and have some cold dinner. Then we will look at your treasures again. Tom, you ought to be proud of your morning’s work! I wish I had discovered that shell-mound myself!”

CHAPTER IX

THE BOX OF CANDY

ALTHOUGH the boys had been disappointed in the kind of treasure which they had found, the Indian relics proved a real treasure, after all. The next day Mr. Thornton went over to the island with them, and they brought back a few more stone things from the mound, but nothing so fine as Tom's plow. However, Mr. Thornton said that there might be other interesting things there which they could dig up when they chose.

Mr. Thornton was so pleased with the boys' discovery that he paid Kenneth and Charlie each two dollars for their share of the treasure. But he gave Tom five dollars to pay for his plow and for first discovering the mound, which had once been an Indian picnic-place. He said these relics should be used to start an

Island museum, to match the Island library. And perhaps some day they would find other things to make the collection more complete.

Tom felt very rich indeed. He had never owned so much money in all his life, and he could not decide what to do with it. There are so many things which one can do with five dollars, especially if one is a boy. But he resolved not to be in a hurry to spend it.

There was a famous professor staying at the hotel on the other end of the Island, and one day Mr. Thornton said to Kenneth and Charlie:—

“Boys, I want to take your Indian relics over to the hotel and show them to the Professor. I should like to know what he thinks of them. Shall we get Tom and row around there?”

Of course, the boys were delighted to go. They had not been to the hotel that summer, and usually there were some interesting puppies in the stable. They found Tom and his dory, and presently they were on their way.

When they reached the hotel Mr. Thornton went to find the Professor, while the boys started to look for the puppies. But as they went past the piazza they heard the hotel keeper talking to a group of ladies.

“No, there is not a mosquito on the Island,” he asserted. “That is one of the things of which we are most proud. I will give a five-pound box of the very best candy to any one who will find a mosquito on this Island.”

The three boys smacked their lips. “Did you hear that? Um! I’d like that box of candy,” sighed Charlie. “I haven’t had any for weeks.”

“Five pounds of candy all at once!” cried Tom. “I never had so much in all my life.”

“Oh, I have,” said Kenneth, “at Christmas time. My! Isn’t it good! I wish I could find that mosquito; but I suppose no one will. There is n’t one on the Island, is there, Tom? You ought to know.”

“No,” said Tom. “I never saw one here. I am sure there is n’t one” — He stopped short

with a sudden wicked idea. "There might be, though," he added under his breath.

"I could n't buy five pounds of very best candy with my two dollars, could I, Charlie?" asked Kenneth.

"No ; but Tom could with his five, if he wanted to spend the money so," said Charlie.

"I don't want to spend the money so," said Tom almost crossly. But how he did long for that candy ! The boys did not understand what made him act so queer. He paid very little attention to the five lovely puppies in the stable. Even when Mr. Thornton came with the Professor, who told them how proud they ought to feel because they had found such an interesting shell-mound, praising Tom especially, he did not seem to care. All the way home he spoke scarcely a word. He was thinking of something very different from what the others were saying.

When they reached the Cove the boys asked Tom to come and play pirate after dinner. But Tom said :—

“No, I’m going to be busy this afternoon.”

“Are you going to hunt for more treasure?” asked Mr. Thornton, laughing. Tom looked queer, but shook his head.

“No,” he said. “I’ve — I’ve got an errand to attend to.” And that was all he had to say.

After dinner Tom rowed away all alone out into the bay, and he was gone until supper time. When he came back he pulled his boat up on the beach and fumbled in his pocket. He was looking for something so very small that at first he thought he had lost it. But no, — there it was, all right. It was a tiny pill box. Tom took off the cover and looked in, grinning to himself. He seemed pleased with his day’s work.

At the supper table Tom’s mother suddenly bent forward and looked at his face sharply. “Why, Tom!” she said. “Where have you been to get all bitten up so? You are covered with mosquito bites! You never got them around here. You must have been over to

Mouse Island. There are lots of mosquitoes in the swamp there.”

Tom turned very red. “Yes, I rowed over to Mouse — this morning. There were two young fish-hawks in the nest on the old pine tree,” he said briefly.

“Did the other boys go with you?” asked his mother.

“No; I went all alone,” he answered, bending his face low over his plate. And then the children began to chatter about something else, for which Tom was glad.

The next morning Tom took his dory and rowed around the Island to the hotel. When he came up to the piazza he found Mr. Smith, the hotel man, talking to a group of ladies, just as he had been doing the day before. Tom took off his cap politely, and said: —

“Good-morning, sir. I’d like to speak with you.”

“Hello!” said Mr. Smith. “You are one of the Island boys, aren’t you? Well, what do you want with me, my hearty?”

Tom drew something out of his pocket and handed it to Mr. Smith.

“What’s this? A pill box!” said Mr. Smith, greatly puzzled. “I don’t want any pills!” All the ladies smiled.

“There’s a mosquito inside, sir,” said Tom. “I heard what you said yesterday: that you’d give a box of candy to any one who would bring you a mosquito; so I found one for you. He’s dead, sir,” he added reassuringly, as Mr. Smith hesitated about taking off the cover of the pill box.

There was a chorus of laughs at the expression on Mr. Smith’s face; but finally he decided to smile. “Well, I am surprised and shocked,” he said. “I could have declared solemnly that there was not a wicked mosquito on this island. But I will wager that this is the only one.”

“Better not make any more rash offers, Mr. Smith,” said one of the girls. “You may have to pay for more candy than you bargain for. We will all set out to hunt.”

“No, I don’t repeat my offer,” said Mr. Smith hastily. “But I suppose I must pay my debt to our friend here. You come around to-morrow morning, Sonny,” he said to Tom, “and get your candy. I’ll send to the city for it by Captain Sackett.”

“Smart boy, isn’t he?” said one lady to another, as Tom went away. “He has such an honest face.”

Tom heard her words, and his ears turned red. But as he rowed home he thought triumphantly, “How good that candy will be!” and he smacked his lips.

CHAPTER X

THE OUTLAW

YES, it was fine candy! Tom thought he had never tasted anything half so good, as he took the first nibble. For Mr. Smith kept his promise, and the candy came safely in Captain Sackett's care. Five pounds in a beautiful pink box tied with gold string!

Tom was eager to share it with his brothers and sisters and with the other pirates; for he was a generous boy.

"I'll give them a surprise!" he said, chuckling to himself as he rowed home from the hotel. He knew where he should find the band, for Mary had said that they were all going that morning to play in the pirate cave. So he did not go straight home, but rowed on around the Point. He beached his boat before any one heard him, and ran up towards the cave, giving a loud war-whoop.

“Hello! where is everybody?” he cried.

The pirates came running from every direction. “Here’s Tom!” cried Mary. “Oh, Tom! Where have you been?”

“Welcome, Slippery Joe,” said the chief. “Have you had an adventure?”

“I have captured some treasure,” said Tom, grinning. “Look here!” and he held up the box of candy.

“Candy!” A shout of joy arose, and the pirates surrounded him eagerly.

“It’s share alike,” said Tom. “I have eaten only one piece so far.”

“Oh, Tom! how good of you!” cried Rose. “It is real city candy and must have cost a lot of money. Did you buy it with your five dollars?”

“I know! I know!” shouted Kenneth. “He found the mosquito; did n’t you, Tom?”

Tom nodded. “Yes, I found him and got the prize.”

“What do you mean about a mosquito?”

“Tell us about it!” begged the pirates. So they all sat down in a circle, each one munching a delicious bit of candy, while Tom told about Mr. Smith’s offer, which Charlie and Kenneth knew already.

“I believed that there was n’t any use in trying,” said Kenneth. “You thought yourself that there was n’t a single mosquito on the Island; did n’t you, Tom?”

“I know I thought so,” began Tom, “but” — He was interrupted by Susan.

“Oh, I know where he found it!” she said. “He went over to Mouse Island the other day. There are lots of mosquitoes there. He was all covered with bites when he came back.”

“Oh, but that was n’t fair!” cried Rose; “that was cheating. Oh, Tom!” She put back the piece of candy which she had taken as the box was passed around the circle for the second time.

There was a long silence. Tom turned red and looked sulky. “What’s the use of being

fussy? I'm a pirate, anyway," he said. "Aren't we all pirates?"

Charlie and Kenneth looked at each other, then Charlie spoke like the chief of the band: "That was n't playing, Tom," he said; "that was a *real* lie. We are n't going to play that way, if I am captain. We aren't going to tell any lies. Here! take your old candy. We don't want any of it. Put it back!" he commanded the others. And reluctantly they all did as Rose had done.

"Ho! all right!" said Tom, jumping to his feet angrily. "If you don't want any, I guess I can manage to worry it down. But you are awful sillies. I won't belong to your old band!" and he flounced out of the cave with the box of candy under his arm. So Tom became an outlaw.

Tom munched away at his candy all by himself, and tried to pretend that he enjoyed it very much. But somehow it was not as good as he had expected. The emptier the box became the less he cared for the candy, which

was a very odd thing. Usually, as every one knows, unless one gobbles it all at once like a little pig, the candy grows better and better, until when there are only a few pieces left it is so perfectly delicious that one cannot bear to think of its disappearing altogether. Before the box was half finished Tom was heartily tired of it. When the last piece was gone he took the box out in his dory, threw it overboard, and smashed it viciously with his oar.

“I don't want to see any more candy as long as I live!” he said. But this was a week later.

All this time Tom had been an outlaw. He would not play with the other children, not even with his brothers and sisters; for he thought that they were all in league against him. He thought they were all disloyal. He had meant to be generous, and share his candy with them; but they had looked at it in a different way. How silly it was to pretend that he was not playing pirate fairly! Why, pirates did much worse things than that! He had never thought till now that it was mean

to tell a lie; but when he remembered how shocked Rose had looked, Tom turned very red. That was hardest of all to bear, — that Rose should think him mean.

Tom wondered if any one would tell his father and mother. But no one did. The pirate captain had made his band promise not to be “telltales.” Tom did not know this, however, and at every meal-time he eyed his brothers and sisters suspiciously, waiting to see what would happen.

His mother said sometimes, “How queer you act nowadays, Tom! What is the matter with you?”

“Nothing,” Tom would answer sulkily; and as soon as he could leave the table he would go off by himself.

The pirate band was sadly broken. Mary felt so sorry about Tom, who would not let her talk to him, that she stayed at home and cried a good deal. Except Sue, the other little Prouts would not go anywhere without Mary. Sue was the only one who went to Sweetbrier

Cottage. But Charlie and Kenneth said it was no fun playing pirate without more boys. So they went off by themselves, while Sue and Rose played dolls in Beech House. Nobody was so happy as before that unlucky mosquito had spoiled everything.

All this while Tom had plenty of time to think. Somehow things looked different to him now. Gradually he had been making up his mind.

One day he got into his dory and rowed around the Island to the end where the hotel stood. As usual there was a crowd upon the piazza, with Mr. Smith in the midst. Tom thought it was the largest crowd he had ever seen. He hung back and hesitated at first, but finally he screwed up his courage. He went straight to the hotel man and stood twirling his cap uneasily. Then he spoke quickly:—

“I have come to tell you, sir, that I did n't play fair about that mosquito. I knew what you said was true, and that there was n't one on the Island; so I went over to Mouse, where

there are a plenty, and I caught one there. It was a lie, and I am sorry. I have just five dollars, — I guess that will pay for the candy, Here it is, sir.” And he thrust into the hand of the amazed Mr. Smith the bill which Mr. Thornton had given him to pay for his share in the pirate treasure.

“Hold on! Stop!” cried Mr. Smith, as Tom darted away. But he soon saw that it was no use for a little fat man like him to try to catch Tom, who had the start. So he sat down again, shaking his head.

“I don’t even know his name!” he said, looking helplessly at the bill in his hand. “But this relieves my mind very much. I am greatly pleased, ladies, that you have this assurance that our Island is without mosquitoes.”

“He was a brave boy to confess before us all,” said one of the ladies. “I like his face. I wish we knew who he is.”

“So do I,” said Mr. Smith. “I must find out.”

CHAPTER XI

GULL ROCK

SUSAN and Rose were tired of playing dolls in Beech House all by themselves.

“Let’s not play this any more,” said Rose. “Sue, let us go and look for that treasure, the *real* treasure, which the boys could not find.”

“All right,” said Sue. “Let’s!”

They ran along the cliff until they came to the bathing beach, then they climbed down to the sand.

“I know where I think the treasure is,” said Rose. “I think it is out there on that great big pile of rock where the gulls are. I have always wanted to go out on those rocks, but sometimes one can’t go, because there is water all around them. See, we could go now.”

“Yes,” said Susan. “I never was out there either. Let’s go!”

This stony point, of which Rose spoke, was called Gull Rock. It rose gray and jagged out of the sea, looking like a castle of stone. It was a favorite resting-place of the sea-gulls. Great flocks of them wheeled and screamed around the rocks and settled on them in gray clouds. There was a narrow pathway of stones which led out to Gull Rock, and on each side of the path the waves lapped gently. The tide was coming in.

“ Let ’s take off our shoes and stockings,” said Rose. So they did. “ Now, follow my leader ! ” Rose cried ; and with much squealing and giggling the little girls began to hop from stone to stone along the narrow path. It was very exciting ! They kept tumbling down, for the rocks were wet and slippery, and in some places were covered with seaweed, which as every one knows is the slitheriest kind of thing under foot ! Sometimes their feet went *splash!* into the pools of water which stood here and there on the path. But they did not mind that, because their feet were bare.



ROSE AND SUE CROSS UPON THE SLIPPERY STONES

At last they came to Gull Rock. They climbed up to the top. My! how surprised the sea-gulls were when the two little heads appeared above the edge of the rock, and how fast they flapped away, chattering and screaming hard things about these uninvited guests!

“It was too bad to disturb them,” said Rose, who always meant to be polite to animals and birds. “But I did so want to see what was on these rocks. Come, Sue; let us climb down on that other side.”

This was the side farthest away from the bathing beach, looking straight out to sea. They scrambled down towards the water, and finally they came to a great hole like a well, that seemed to go down forever.

“Oh, look!” cried Rose. “I do believe there might be a treasure hidden in the bottom of this hole. Does n’t it look mysterious, Sue?”

“Oh, yes!” said Sue. She did not know what “mysterious” meant, but she thought it had something to do with treasures.

“Look, there are cracks in the side, like steps,” said Rose. “Let’s go down.”

“Oh, do you dare?” cried Sue. “There might be something awful at the bottom.”

“Pooh!” said Rose. “I am not afraid. I am going down.” And she began to descend, fitting her bare toes into the cracks of the rocks. Sue was afraid, but she followed, for she did not dare be left behind.

They went down for what seemed a long way, when suddenly there was a funny noise below them. “*Chug!*” went something; and it sounded like a growl. Sue gave a loud scream.

“Oh!” she cried. “There *is* something down there!” And she began to scramble up. Now Rose did not mind the “chug” so much as she did the scream. Rose hated screams. When Sue cried “oh!” so suddenly, it startled Rose. She jumped; her foot slipped out of its crack, and she fell.

Down she tumbled, bumping herself on the rocks as she went. She came flat on the bot-

tom of the hole with her foot doubled under her, and she gave a cry of pain.

“Oh! what is it?” called Sue, in a shaking voice from above. “Is the creature eating you up?”

“Oh, no!” moaned Rose. “It is my foot, my foot! It hurts me. I can’t stand up on it. Oh! oh!” Rose was a brave little girl and she never cried unless she was badly hurt. But now the pain was terrible.

“Oh, if there is n’t any awful creature there, I will come down and help you,” said Sue. Presently she, too, came slipping into the bottom of the hole. But she fell without hurting herself. There was plenty of room for her beside Rose. She found that they were in a little cave. But it was not a nice one like the pirate cave. It was damp and wet and slimy, very cold, with the disagreeable smell of decaying seaweed.

Sue looked around fearfully and shivered. “It is a horrid place,” she said. “I am afraid to stay here. Let’s go out quickly.”

She helped Rose to her feet ; but when she tried to step poor Rose screamed with pain and fell back in a heap.

“ I can't walk,” she wailed. “ My foot is broken, I think. See, it is all swelled up ! ”

Sure enough. The poor foot was turning the most dreadful color, a mixed purple and green, and it was twice as big as it ought to be. Rose had twisted her ankle badly.

“ Oh, what shall we do ? ” said Sue. “ How will you ever get out ? ”

Just then “ chug ! ” came that same queer sound. This time both Rose and Sue screamed and looked with wide eyes down into the farther corner of the cave, which was narrow and dark. They expected to see some creature come creeping out ; but nothing appeared.

“ What do you suppose it is ? ” whispered Sue.

“ I don't know,” said Rose. “ But it is dreadful. I want to go home.”

“ What shall we do ? ” wailed Susan, beginning to cry.

“Don't do that!” said Rose. “It will not do any good, you know. Oh, of course, you will have to go home and get somebody to come and help me.” She shuddered to think of being left alone. “Go quickly, Sue. And oh, do come back as soon as you can!”

“I will,” said Sue; and she began to climb out of the hole. Rose's heart sank as she heard the sound of Sue's feet growing fainter and fainter, and she almost called her back; but she bit her lips and tried to be brave. When Sue called down “Good-by!” she felt her heart grow very cold indeed. It sounded so far away. Every one was so far away, and she was alone in that dreadful place with no one to help!

Just then *chug!* came that sound again. What could it be? There surely was something in the cave beside herself. Rose stared fearfully into the dark corner, but still she saw nothing. She waited nervously for the noise to come again. There it was, louder than ever, — *chug!* And this time a little splash of

water spurted out of the darkness. Was some animal splashing there? — Why, no! Of course, it was a little wave coming in from the sea. There must be a crack in the bottom of the cave. Well, that was not so bad. Rose almost laughed to think how frightened she had been. But her foot gave a twinge of pain and she cried “Ow!” instead.

Rose wondered how long she would have to stay there. It would take some time, she knew, for Susan to run home and bring her father back. But already it seemed as if she had waited for hours.

Chug! came the noise again, very fiercely. This time a spout of water spattered across the cave into Rose’s lap. She did not like this, and painfully drew herself as close as she could against the wall of the cave, so that the next wave should not reach her. But it did reach her. In a few minutes there came another *chug!* very loud indeed, and with it there was a bang which seemed to shake the rock itself. In a second a jet of water burst out

of the darkness, spattering Rose from head to foot. She screamed, for now she knew what it meant. The tide was rising, and the waves were rushing into the crack at the bottom of the cave. By and by it would be full of water, and then what would become of her?

There came another *chug!* and a bang on the wall outside, and she heard a big wave burst over the rock. A second later the spout of water leaped at her, bigger than ever, and at the same time a little stream began to trickle down into the hole from above. The waves were dashing across Gull Rock, and soon the cave would be flooded!

Poor Rose was now thoroughly frightened. Once more she tried to rise and pull herself up the well. But it was of no use. She could not stand on her foot, and she sank back with a moan.

Another wave dashed against the rock, and when it trickled away it left Rose drenched and gasping for breath. What should she do? She knew that if something did not happen

to help her in a few minutes, she should be drowned. Oh, why did not Sue hurry? Why did not Papa come?

“Papa! Papa!” she cried. “Oh, help, help! — I must scream as loud as I can,” she thought. “Sue does not know. She will not think there is any danger yet. Perhaps if they hear me they will hurry. — Oh, help! help!” she cried, at the top of her lungs.

And then something happened!

CHAPTER XII

THE RESCUE

THAT same morning Mr. Smith, the hotel man, drove up to Sweetbrier Cottage. He found Mr. Thornton sitting on the front steps sharpening his knife.

“Good-morning, Sir,” said Mr. Smith. “Do you happen to know a boy named Tom?”

“Tom Prout? Yes, I do,” said Mr. Thornton.

“Well, I want to see him,” said Mr. Smith. “I have a five-dollar bill that belongs to him.”

“A five-dollar bill!” exclaimed Mr. Thornton in surprise. “What do you mean?” Then Mr. Smith told him the story of the mosquito and the box of candy.

“What do you think of that?” said Mr. Smith, when he had finished.

“I think that Tom was a brave boy to confess before all those people,” answered Mr. Thornton. “He did wrong, of course, but he made up for it as well as he could. Tom means to be a good boy, Mr. Smith.”

“I am sure of it,” agreed Mr. Smith warmly, “and I want to give him a chance to make up for that candy without paying me a cent. I guess he will want all his money by and by for school or for something else. I should be glad to help him earn something at the hotel.”

“Tom would like that, I know,” said Mr. Thornton, much pleased. “He is very handy with boats. I trust my children out with him every day.”

“Is that so?” cried Mr. Smith. “The very thing! I’ll get him to row the ladies back and forth from the yacht. I’d like to see Tom.”

“I think we shall find him playing with the other children,” said Mr. Thornton. “Will you come with me?” (You see, Mr.

Thornton did not know that Tom was an outlaw.)

The two men went along the cliff to Beech House. It was empty except for the dolls and the Teddy Bear which Rose and Susan had left there when they went to look for the treasure. Then they went on until they came to the pirate cave. But Kenneth and Charlie were playing there alone.

“Where is Tom?” asked Mr. Thornton.

“This gentleman wants to see him.”

“I don’t know,” said Kenneth.

“He does n’t play with us any more,” added Charlie.

“Why not?” asked Mr. Thornton. But the boys looked at each other and were silent. They were not going to tell tales.

“We know all about the unlucky mosquito,” said Mr. Thornton. “Tom was sorry, and told Mr. Smith the whole story himself. He gave his five dollars to pay for the candy.”

“Did he do that?” said Charlie, his face brightening.

“Hurrah for Tom!” cried Kenneth. “I knew he was all right. — Hello! there he goes now in his dory. Tom! oh, Tom!”

Kenneth waved his hat and shouted, but Tom did not seem to hear. He was at some distance out in the bay, rowing towards the bathing beach. They all shouted and waved, and finally Tom seemed to hear, for he looked around; but he did not show any intention of rowing towards the cave. Perhaps he still felt like an outlaw.

“He rows well,” said Mr. Smith, as Tom disappeared around the Point.

“He knows more about boats than a good many men ever learn,” said Mr. Thornton. “I wonder where he is going.”

“We don’t seem likely to catch him this morning,” said Mr. Smith; “but if you see him, I wish you would ask him to come over and talk with me to-morrow. Hello! what’s this?”

Down the cliff scrambled Susan, panting and disheveled. As she ran she shouted some-

thing which they could not understand. But when she came nearer they made out the word "Rose! Rose!"

In an instant Mr. Thornton jumped to his feet and ran to meet her. "What is the matter?" he cried, turning pale. "What has happened to Rose?"

Presently Sue recovered enough breath to speak brokenly. "She—she fell!" gasped Sue. "She broke her foot, I guess. She—can't walk. We—were looking—for the treasure—in the cave—out on the rocks—beyond the bathing beach."

"My poor little Rose!" gasped Mr. Thornton; and he started on the run, followed by the others. They all ran as fast as they could, but it was a long way. Poor Sue had found it so when she stumbled along going in the other direction. Now she toiled back again far behind the others,—behind even Mr. Smith, who was short and fat and grew very red as he ran. He had to stop often and mop his forehead with his handkerchief; but Mr.

Thornton never stopped until he came to the bathing beach. Kenneth and Charlie were close behind him. They heard him give a loud cry when he looked across the beach to Gull Rock, where Sue had said Rose was. In a minute they saw the reason.

Gull Rock was now an island!

A wide bay of water stretched between the rock and the shore, with only a few stones poking up here and there on what had been the pathway by which Rose and Sue had crossed. It was nearly high tide. As they looked, a great wave rolled in and covered Gull Rock with spray.

“Look at that!” cried Mr. Thornton. “My little Rose is out there! Oh, I must go to her!” And he dashed into the water and began to wade along the rocks of the hidden pathway. But the stones were slippery and he kept stumbling.

“You can’t do it!” yelled Mr. Smith. “We must get a boat.”

“There is no boat within half a mile,”

cried Mr. Thornton, in despair. "I must try to reach her in this way." Just then another great wave came rolling in. It broke against Mr. Thornton's knees. He lost his footing and tottered. The pool into which he fell was over his head, and he would have drowned if he had not known how to swim. The water was growing deeper all the time. "I must swim over," thought Mr. Thornton. "But even if I get there safely I don't see how I can climb up onto those steep rocks. However, I must try."

Just as he was about to strike out into deep water, there came a shout from Mr. Smith and the boys on the shore. "Tom! Tom!" they cried. "Hurrah for Tom!"

"Papa! Papa! come ashore!" cried Kenneth. "Tom has Rose in his boat!"

Sure enough! Tom's dory was just rounding Gull Rock, coming fast towards shore, and in the stern sat Rose, very pale but safe.

You see, Tom was just passing Gull Rock in his dory when Rose gave that last cry for

help. He had heard it, but at first he thought her little shrill voice was only a sea-gull screaming on the rock. But when he heard it a second time cry, — “Help! oh, help!” he pricked up his ears. No sea-gull ever spoke words so plainly as that. Tom shouted, “Hullo there!” in answer, and in a moment he heard a voice cry, “Tom! Tom! come quickly!”

“That is Rose’s voice!” thought Tom, surprised almost out of his wits. He rowed as close to the rock as he dared, on account of the surf. “Is that you, Rose?” he shouted. “Where are you?”

“I’m down in a dreadful cave, Tom,” said Rose very faintly. “My foot is broken, and the water is coming in. Oh, come quickly, Tom, or I shall be drowned!”

“I guess that’s so,” thought Tom, with a sudden idea, as a great wave broke over Gull Rock. “She is down in the Punch Bowl! It’s almost high tide. Oh, I must be quick or we’ll both be drowned.”

Tom had no thought of being afraid. Rose

must be saved if he could do it. Now he had a chance to prove what a good boatman he was. He rowed as fast as possible around Gull Rock to a place where he thought he could land. It was on the sheltered side of the rock, where the waves did not break quite so heavily; but it was difficult enough. He drew up his boat and fastened it securely. Then he hurried to the Punch Bowl, which was the fisherman's name for that dangerous cave.

Tom knew it well. When he came to the hole he shouted down anxiously. Rose answered, so he knew that she was still safe. Down he climbed, nimbly as a monkey. At the bottom he found the poor little girl in a pool of water.

“Oh, Tom!” she cried. “I am so glad! Do you think you can get me out?”

“’Course I’ll get you out!” said Tom, feeling very big. Just then a great wave came sweeping in and nearly drowned them both. “We must hurry,” sputtered Tom; “there’s no time to spare. Come, Rose, you must try

as hard as you can." Rose tried as hard as she could. Tom lifted and pulled and pushed, and somehow or other he managed to help her out of that dreadful hole. Then he half carried, half dragged her over the rocks to his dory. Just as they were about to push off there came the biggest wave of all. It broke completely over the rock, filled the boat half full of water, and knocked both the children off their feet. But they clung together and were not swept into the sea.

"If we had been in the cave when that wave broke," said Tom solemnly, "we should both have been drowned. Let's get away before another of those big fellows comes."

He emptied the water out of the boat, lifted Rose in, and pushed off with all his might. The next big wave leaped after them, burying Gull Rock under a heap of foam. But the children had escaped. The boat was moving through quieter waters towards the bathing beach.

They heard a shout from the shore, and

looking up saw the crowd of anxious watchers. There were Kenneth and Charlie dancing up and down and shouting, "Hurrah!" There was Mr. Smith, first fluttering his handkerchief, then using it to wipe his eyes. There was Mr. Thornton up to his waist in the water, waving his arms and calling, —

"Rose! Rose! Are you safe?"

"Yes, I'm safe, Papa!" cried Rose. "Tom has saved me."

In a few minutes Rose was in her father's arms, and he was hugging and kissing her, calling her by all her pet baby names. Mr. Smith was shaking hands with Tom, who looked dazed.

"I'm proud to know you, Tom," he said. "You are a regular sea-dog, my boy. We must have you over to the hotel to help us with the boats there."

"Tom, my lad," said Mr. Thornton, as he started to carry Rose up to the cottage, where her sprained ankle could be cared for, "I'll never forget this. Boys," he added, turning to

Charlie and Kenneth, who stood eagerly looking on, "if you want to see what a real hero looks like, there he is. You had better write it down in your pirate log-book that one of your band saved a little girl's life. That is something for you to boast of, indeed."

"I must go home and get dry," muttered Tom, turning away much embarrassed. After all, he was an outlaw, and he knew that Mr. Smith understood why, though Mr. Thornton might not. Tom did not belong to the pirate band any more. But when he turned shamefacedly away, Kenneth and Charlie came running up, and each seized him by the hand.

"Tom, old fellow, we are proud of you!" said Kenneth heartily.

"Tom," said Charlie, taking something out of his pocket, "here is my pirate knife. You have got to be captain now. You are the best of us all, as Uncle Jack says."

"Hurrah!" shouted Kenneth, dancing up and down. "We have a real live hero for our captain, and we will do great things!"

“Oh, pshaw!” said Tom, turning red but looking pleased. He saw that they no longer thought him an outlaw. “I don’t want to be captain,” he protested.

“You must, you must!” cried Charlie and Kenneth. “Must n’t he, Mr. Smith?”

“Sure,” said Mr. Smith, “I think he will make a fine captain. But I say, Captain, I hope you will find time to do a little un-piratical work for me, as a plain sailor. I want you to help with the boats at the hotel. Perhaps it is n’t as exciting as pirating or catching mosquitoes,” he added, with a twinkle, “but I think you will find that it pays better.”

“Oh, I want to earn some money,” said Tom. “Some day I want to go to school in the city.”

“But if you go to Mr. Smith’s you won’t have time to play with us,” said Charlie; and Kenneth added, “Then you won’t be our pirate captain, Tom?”

“Oh, yes he will,” said Mr. Smith. “I’ll only keep him a few hours every day, when

the ladies want to go sailing. Tom, will you be my sailor man?"

"Thank you, everybody," said Tom, grinning. "I will be both, if you want me to. I'll be a pirate captain and an honest sailor."

"Here's a little advance wages to begin with," said Mr. Smith, handing Tom the famous five-dollar bill. Tom flushed.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "But would you mind waiting until I have earned it? I want to start square this time."

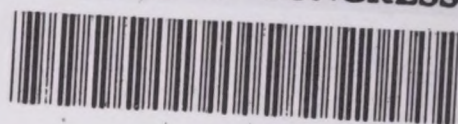
"Good for you, Tom!" said Mr. Smith approvingly. "I see that we shall be great friends."

And Mr. Smith proved to be a true prophet.

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